

"Dear Mr. President", Nashville, Tennessee, January or February 1942

AFS 6439A

Alexander Luvey: Mr. President, this is Alexander Luvey, a lawyer from Nashville, Tennessee. It is generally recognized that the Negroes of the South are not contributing as much as they can contribute to his national defense. Nor are they receiving the benefits which the federal government desires them to receive. This is due to the fact that the federal government is working through constituted local authorities. It is true that local served government is a theory of democratic government, but Mr. President, this is a condition and not a theory which confronts us Negroes in the South. When the head of our government publically announces that this is a white man's country, when the head of our local Department of Education fights vigorously to maintain a duo educational system paying different salary schedules, how can we expect that the local authorities will function fairly and efficiently for the Negro?

Mr. President, if the Negro is to make his contribution to the federal government, if the Negro is to receive the benefits which is his due this must be operated through the federal channels with a responsibility directly in Washington and not through a local-served government.

Pam Tucker: I am Pam Tucker, seventeen year-old girl reserve of the YWCA and a student of Pearl Senior High School. You've had this say about everything Mr. President. You want peace, peace of mind, spirit, and body. You're torn up inside because you don't understand what is happening or why. You don't give us no consolation with that hysterical action. Give us emotional security.

We as the Negro youth of Nashville think you may help these emergency times by providing better recreational facilities and educational opportunities. By wholesome recreation and better education we may develop our minds as well as our bodies so as to better serve our country, home, and community.

Myrtle Copeland: Mr. President Roosevelt, my name is Miss Myrtle Copeland. I am a colored lady and a resident of Nashville, Tennessee. I am very much interested in this defense program. I am studying first-aid and many of we colored people are in order to render service in any emergency. I will do my part in any defense program to defend our country and I hope we as a colored race will be given more consideration for better jobs.

Unidentified Man: Mr. President, I was born in Nashville, Tennessee some years ago. I'm in every capacity in the social life of Nashville. I've had the privilege of heading it up at some time or other. I graduated one of the greatest medical schools in the world, Meharry Medical College in nineteen

hundred and thirteen. At the time of my graduation I had the good pleasure, or you might say, the ill-pleasure whatever you might say it was, to be a member of a state militia. I was First Sergeant at that time. When the first world war broke out I couldn't get out of this company and I was transferred immediately to the Des Moines training camp where I took the officers training camp for a period of time and was promoted to the rank of Captain there.

I went with my boys overseas and we fought and did our part in the first great world war. We came back and this company was disbanded. We tried repeatedly to get the different governors of the state and the adjunct generals to reinstate this company, and to the present time we have not been successful. And when this great struggle this second time broke out, we again applied to the governor and his staff and for several weeks we have been waiting.

We in Nashville and in the South are willing to do our part. The only thing that we are asking is that we be given opportunity to fight, to live, and to die for the thing that we call democracy. The thing that will cause this world to give the minority groups an opportunity to achieve all of the blessings of life, health, and happiness.